GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
POWER
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:825
ANSWERED ON:17.08.2007
ATHIRAPPILLY HYDEL POWER PROJECT IN KERALA
Sujatha Smt. C.S.

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up a hydel power project at Athirappilly in Kerala;

(b) if so, whether necessary clearance has been given to this Project;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any steps have been taken by the Government for the protection of environment and livelihood of the tribals of the area; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE)

(a) : The Government of Kerala through Kerala State Electricity Board proposes to set up a hydel power project at Athirappilly in Kerala.

(b) & (c) : Athirappilly Hydro Electric Project (163 MW) was accorded Techno- Economic Clearance (TEC) by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) on 31st March, 2005 at an estimated cost of Rs. 385.6 crores at April, 2004 price level. According to CEA, the environmental clearance for the above project was initially accorded on 20.1.1998. The environmental clearance was suspended on the basis of a judgment (17.10.2001) of the Hon`ble High Court of Kerala. The court had directed to conduct the public hearing. The public hearing was conducted by Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) on 6.2.2002. Environmental clearance for the project was restored on 10.2.2002 subject to strict compliance to certain terms and conditions.

Public Interest Litigations (PILs) were filed before the Hon`ble High Court of Kerala against the grant of environmental clearance and implementation of the project. The Hon`ble High Court delivered its judgment on 23.3.2006 quashing the environment clearance of the project and directed the KSPCB to conduct the public hearing afresh after publishing the EIA report and complete the same within two months. The public hearing was conducted by the KSPCB on 15th June, 2006 and the report was submitted to MoEF on 22nd July, 2006. The proposal was considered by the Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) in its meetings held on 23rd August, 2006 and 15th November, 2006. On receipt of further representations, a Sub-Committee of EAC has visited the proposed site during April, 2007 and submitted its report to Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF). MoEF has accorded fresh environmental clearance on 18.7.2007 subject to the strict compliance of certain terms and conditions.

(d) & (e) : Environment clearance given by MoEF stipulates conditions for protection of environment like completion of Catchment Area Treatment plan in three years, mandatory release of water over Athirappilly falls throughout the year, carrying out of Biodiversity studies etc.

The clearance also proposes steps to protect the livelihood of tribals like providing employment opportunity to the tribal settlements, to provide better amenities to existing school, to establish primary health Centre, to improve the quality of life of tribal families etc.